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On Pascha, the Ecumenical Patriarch speaks to young people on the pandemic



Ecumenical Patriarch to the Young: You can turn the pandemic of fear and disease into an opportunity for support and love for your fellow human beings.

The Glorious Resurrection of the Lord was celebrated in the Center of Orthodoxy with special splendor and solemnity, and in accord with longstanding ecclesiastical tradition and order.

The Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew presided at midnight on Holy Saturday at the Resurrection service in the courtyard of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, surrounded by the clergy of the Patriarchal Court, and then addressed a Message for the Feast of Holy Pascha to the entirety of the Church, and especially to young people, to whom he has dedicated the current year 2020. He made a particularly moving reference to the Orthodox Christian youth living in Turkey, in a heterogeneous environment and coming from various ethnic minorities, living under the affection and care of the local, First-Throned Church of Saint Andrew the

Apostle.

Specifically, the Ecumenical Patriarch said:

Christ is Risen!

The joyful message of the Resurrection, of the victory of life over death, resonating in the Oikoumene, beats in the heart of every believer.

Christ is risen again and again and again!

We celebrate Pascha, living in a world that continues to face poverty and injustice, violence and confrontation, and which, this year, is now being tested very severely by the pandemic of the coronavirus. And humanity stands in awe and frightened in the face of this fact, which has overturned everything we considered, of course, self-evident and constant.

However, the Resurrection of our Lord is the expectation and hope for a better future for the person who is suffering today, in pain and anguish. We announce tonight the victory of Christ over death as the true source of optimism and hope from this corner of the earth, from the Center of Orthodoxy, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, where for centuries we have continued to live crucified, to transmit the light of Christ and to preach love and brotherhood. The triumphant and cosmopolitan paean of hope “Christ is risen” reminds us that the pain of passion is always followed by the joy of the Resurrection.

In this unexpected ordeal for humanity, we would like to address in particular the young men and women of the world, saying to them: Our dear children, you should know that through today’s, but also every trial, we can all become better, cultivating the virtues of patience and faith, since, according to the Apostle Paul, “suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.” (Romans 5:3-5).

Dear young people,

Today you are more than ever the hope and the future of humanity. Not only as a natural, law-abiding evolution of things, but as individuals, who will be called upon to bear the brunt of their burdens and to take responsibility for tackling problems, for the preservation of traditions, for freedom, justice and solidarity. Humanity needs your dreams and sensibilities, your dynamism and your will, your visions for

a better world. To protect the creation of God, our common home and the natural environment.

Do not be afraid of any pandemic, nor of the economic difficulties we hear that will come. You can turn the pandemic of fear and sickness into a time of support and love for your fellow human beings, for every human being. We are all brothers and sisters on this earth that is now groaning and struggling.

I would like, in particular, to extend paschal and paternal greetings to the young Orthodox men and women who live here, closer to our Patriarchate: Romans, Turks, Russians, Ukrainians, Romanians, Georgians, Bulgarians, Gagauzians, and all nationalities — where you can, my children, though speaking a different language and having a different culture, what unites you, unites us, is the common Orthodox faith, the faith in the Risen Christ, the Redeemer, whose beloved children you are. And further, it unites you that you all belong to the First-Throned Church, our Ecumenical Patriarchate, as long as you live, permanently or temporarily, in this historic City, and also within the limits of its jurisdiction.

We hope that as soon as the conditions allow, we will hold the scheduled conference of all Orthodox youth in Turkey, and then we will have the opportunity to discuss our common problems and common visions for the present and the future of our Orthodox Church in this place, with which it is inextricably linked.

Until then, I embrace you all paternally, our dear young men and women, and I wish you, long with as all the young people of our well-known provinces, all the blessings of the Risen Christ. I cordially greet your families and we invite you all to proclaim together solemnly: “Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!”

Then the Ecumenical Patriarch celebrated the Divine Liturgy of the Resurrection.

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